

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action dated February 6, 2008. Claims 20-38 are pending in the application. Claims 22-38 have been withdrawn due to a previous restriction requirement. Claim 20 is amended herein. Claims 39 and 40 are newly added. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge deposit account 02-1818 for any fees which are due and owing.

The Office Action rejected Claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 06-132038 to Yasutaka ("Yasutaka"). Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Yasutaka in further view of U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2001/0031386 to Suguwara ("Suguwara"). Of the rejected claims, Claim 20 is the sole independent claim. Claim 20 has been amended to recite, at least in part, a hydrogen gas humidity control apparatus, which includes: a first hydrogen flow path or chamber thereof to which at least hydrogen gas is supplied; a second hydrogen flow path or chamber thereof to which at least hydrogen gas is supplied; and a *substantially planar* moisture carrier for separating the first hydrogen flow path or chamber thereof from the second hydrogen flow path or chamber thereof and for allowing at least one of water and water vapor to pass therethrough. One non-limiting example of the presently claimed invention is shown, for example, in Fig. 2 of the present application. In this example, the hydrogen gas humidity control apparatus includes a first hydrogen flow path 40, a second hydrogen flow path 33, and a substantially planar moisture carrier 29 for separating the first hydrogen flow path from the second hydrogen flow path. Yasutaka and Suguwara fail to disclose or suggest the features of the presently claimed invention.

Yasutaka discloses a solid high polymer electrolyte type fuel cell equipped with a reaction gas humidifier in which a stable amount of humidification is obtained in accordance with the amount of reaction gas provided. (See, Yasutaka, Abstract). As shown in Fig. 1 of Yasutaka, a fuel gas humidification equipment 21 is provided with a *steam transparency film 12* which forms the inside of the tight container in the humidification gas chamber 13 and the humidified gas chamber 14. (See, Yasutaka, [0013]). Yasutaka also discloses that the steam transparency film 12 is folded up in the shape of a bellows. (See, Id. and the example of the bellows shaped film in Fig. 1). Moreover, Yasutaka discloses that: "since the surface area of the steam transparency film can be easily extended corresponding to the amount of reaction GASUGA, without enlarging reactant gas humidification equipment by *folding up and arranging*

the steam transparency film for example, to a wave type, the advantage which can carry out [easy]-izing of the miniaturization of reactant gas humidification equipment and the large-capacity-izing is acquired.” (See, Yasutaka, [0017]). Therefore, Yasutaka fails to disclose or suggest a *substantially planar* moisture carrier for separating the first hydrogen flow path or chamber thereof from the second hydrogen flow path or chamber, as in the presently claimed invention. Suguwara is relied on for the alleged disclosure of hydrogen fuel gas that is generated by fuel reforming, and thus does not cure the deficiencies of Yasutaka.

With regard to the new dependent claims, Yasutaka does not disclose or suggest: a first voltage application electrode associated with the first hydrogen flow path or hydrogen chamber; a second voltage application electrode associated with the second hydrogen flow path or hydrogen chamber; and the moisture carrier is sandwiched between the first voltage application electrode and the second voltage application electrode, as recited in Claim 39. Moreover, Yasutaka does not disclose or suggest that a voltage is applied to a portion between the first voltage application electrode and the second voltage application electrode, as recited in new Claim 40. As mentioned above, Yasutaka focuses on controlling humidification by enlarging a surface area of steam transparency film by forming same in a wave type or bellows type configuration. For at least the reasons above, Yasutaka and Suguwara fail to render obvious amended Claim 20 and Claims 21 and 39-40 that depend therefrom, even assuming that the references are properly combinable.

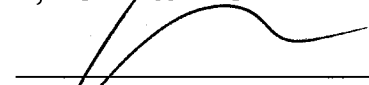
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the §102(b) and §103(a) rejections of Claim 20 and 21 be withdrawn.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and earnestly solicit reconsideration of same.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLP

BY



Thomas C. Basso

Reg. No. 46,541

Customer No. 29175

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